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New York

President: Mr. Eliasson ..... (Sweden)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 15 (*continued*)

Question of Palestine

Draft resolutions (A/60/L.28, A/60/L.29, A/60/L.30 and A/60/L.31)

The Acting President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held the debate on this item at its 57th through 59th plenary meetings, on 29 and 30 November 2005.

Mr. Thomson (United Kingdom): I would like to make a few additional comments on this item on behalf of the European Union (EU) and a number of countries that align themselves with this statement: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine.

The European Union welcomes the recent positive developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and parts of the northern West Bank, the Agreement on Movement and Access and the subsequent opening of the Rafah border on 25 November 2005, and the forthcoming multiparty elections for the Palestinian Legislative Council foreseen for 25 January 2006 all represent significant steps towards implementation of the road map. While recognizing that more remains to be done, the European Union believes that such developments should be taken into account when considering the role of existing United Nations structures.

Equally, the European Union has consistently supported the objective of streamlining in the General Assembly as part of the overall process of revitalization of the Assembly. In that respect, the European Union was pleased that in the Third Committee this year, the Palestinian observer delegation was willing to withdraw its resolution on Palestinian children incorporating relevant elements into another existing resolution.

The European Union also supports the updating and re-examination of existing United Nations structures, such as the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, to better take into account political developments and realities on the ground. The EU looks forward to further discussions on this issue. The European Union has, in the past, had some reservations about the terms of reference of that United Nations body, as it felt that it does not sufficiently reflect the spirit of the peace process. Nevertheless, since the EU now has two Member States that have historically held a different view, our voting pattern will respect that position and reflect it accordingly.

The EU remains committed to the two-State solution as laid out in the road map and agreed between the parties, which would result in a viable,

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contiguous, sovereign and independent Palestinian State existing side by side in peace with Israel, both living within recognized and secure borders.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolutions A/60/L.28, A/60/L.29, A/60/L.30 and A/60/L.31.

We turn first to draft resolution A/60/L.28, entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People". The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zimbabwe have joined the list of sponsors.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

Draft resolution A/60/L.28 was adopted by 106 votes to 8, with 59 abstentions (resolution 60/36).

[Subsequently the delegation of Tonga informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/60/L.29, entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat". The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zimbabwe have joined the list of sponsors.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Morocco,

Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Vanuatu.

Draft resolution A/60/L.29 was adopted by 105 votes to 8, with 59 abstentions (resolution 60/37).

[Subsequently the delegation of Tonga informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: We turn now to draft resolution A/60/L.30, entitled "Special information programme on the question of Palestine of the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat". The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has joined the list of sponsors.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu.

Draft resolution A/60/L.30 was adopted by 160 votes to 7, with 6 abstentions (resolution 60/38).

[Subsequently the delegation of Tonga informed the Secretariat that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/60/L.31, entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine". The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and Zimbabwe have joined the list of sponsors.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Australia, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu.

Draft resolution A/60/L.31 was adopted by 156 votes to 6, with 9 abstentions (resolution 60/39).

[Subsequently the delegations of Mexico and of Timor-Leste informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of Tonga that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of vote on the draft resolutions just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Laurin (Canada): With regard to the resolution entitled "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", in the absence of clear value added as a result of the work of the Committee, Canada maintains its opposition and believes that the General Assembly should consider reassigning scarce United Nations resources to efforts that contribute more directly to the peace process objectives.

With respect to the resolution entitled "Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat", as we indicated last year, Canada questions the value of the work of that Division. We believe that the time has come for the General Assembly to assess the effectiveness of that particular body and to consider reassigning resources to the implementation of activities more strategic to the protection and

promotion of Palestinian rights and to the achievement of a peaceful settlement. Canada voted against draft resolution A/60/L.29 for those reasons.

Finally, with respect to the resolution entitled "Peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine", Canada considers it imperative that an explicit and unequivocal condemnation of suicide bombing be included in a resolution pertaining to the peaceful settlement of the question of Palestine. In the absence of an explicit condemnation, Canada has taken the difficult decision to change its vote this year from support to abstention. That abstention should not be misinterpreted as signalling any kind of change in Canadian policy towards the Middle East peace process. We continue to firmly advocate support for the objectives of the road map.

Ms. Rivero (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): Uruguay wishes once again to express its conviction that a return to the road map is essential and urgent in order to complete the peace process and achieve as soon as possible a just and comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

Uruguay supports a just and lasting solution achieved through peaceful means, leading to the coexistence of two free and independent States, Israel and Palestine.

My country believes that the creation of a viable, democratic, sovereign and contiguous Palestine will ensure the conditions necessary for both peoples to live in peace within secure, internationally recognized borders, in accordance with international law and with the provisions of the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly and the Security Council.

Mr. Southcott (Australia): I am speaking in explanation of Australia's vote on draft resolutions concerning the Division for Palestinian Rights, the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine.

Australia is concerned that a number of resolutions of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly are unbalanced in their criticism of Israel. The singling out of one side only for blame in the current situation is deeply unhelpful.

Australia remains concerned at the high level of United Nations Secretariat resources allocated to anti-Israeli activity, including the Division for Palestinian Rights of the Secretariat and the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The annual resolutions endorsing those work units do nothing to streamline or rationalize the Secretariat's structure or make its work more balanced.

Similarly, the Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine of the Secretariat's Department of Public Information is not a constructive use of United Nations resources, or does it help make the Secretariat's work more balanced.

Those resolutions serve only to distract the parties from more pressing issues and do nothing to help the peace process.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

The General Assembly has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of agenda item 15.

Agenda item 14 (continued)

The situation in the Middle East

Draft resolutions (A/60/L/32 and A/60/L.33)

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolutions A/60/L.32 and A/60/L.33.

We turn first to draft resolution A/60/L.32, entitled "The Syrian Golan". Algeria has joined the list of sponsors.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Congo, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominica, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic

Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Canada, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Nauru, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tuvalu, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Vanuatu.

Draft resolution A/60/L.32 was adopted by 106 votes to 6, with 62 abstentions (resolution 60/40).

[Subsequently the delegation of Timor-Leste informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of Tonga that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Draft resolution A/60/L.33 is entitled "Jerusalem". The following countries have been added to the list of sponsors: Algeria and Guinea.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Comoros, Croatia, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia and Montenegro, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Costa Rica, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Palau, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Albania, Australia, Cameroon, El Salvador, Fiji, Guatemala, Haiti, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu.

Draft resolution A/60/L.33 was adopted by 153 votes to 7, with 12 abstentions (resolution 60/41).

[Subsequently the delegation of Timor-Leste informed the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour, and the delegation of Tonga that it had intended to abstain.]

The Acting President: Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seat.

Ms. Davis (United Kingdom): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and the countries that align themselves with this statement: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Serbia and Montenegro, Liechtenstein and Ukraine.

I would like to explain the vote by the countries of the European Union on the resolution on the Syrian Golan.

The European Union remains concerned about the situation in the Middle East. It reiterates to all parties the importance of maintaining forward momentum towards full implementation of the road map. There can be no military solution to the Middle East conflict. A just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the situation in the Middle East, including on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, must be based on Security Council resolution 242 (1967), which emphasizes the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the need to work for a just and lasting peace in which every State in the region can live in security, and on subsequent Security Council resolutions 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003). It must be based on the terms of reference of the Madrid Conference, in particular the principle of land for peace, as well as on the implementation of the road map and all existing agreements between the parties. We will continue to work relentlessly with the regional parties, as part of the Middle East Quartet, towards that goal.

The European Union wishes to reiterate that a final peace settlement will not be complete without taking account of the Israel-Syria and Israel-Lebanon aspects. Negotiations should resume as soon as possible with the aim of reaching an agreement.

It should be recalled that, earlier this month, the European Union voted in favour of the resolution on the Syrian Golan in the Fourth Committee, which called upon Israel to desist from changing the demographic composition of the occupied Syrian Golan and, in particular, to desist from the establishment of settlements. We believe that the resolution on the Syrian Golan under today's agenda item contains references that could undermine the process of bilateral negotiations. For that reason, as in previous years, the European Union abstained in the voting on that resolution.

Finally, in the spirit of rationalizing the work of the General Assembly, the European Union would prefer to have only one resolution dealing with this issue before this body.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I wish to explain the votes cast by the delegations of Brazil and Argentina on resolution 60/40 on the Syrian Golan, just adopted by the General Assembly.

Brazil and Argentina voted in favour of the resolution because it is our understanding that its principal and fundamental thrust relates to the illegality of the acquisition of territories by force. Paragraph 4 of Article 2 of the United Nations Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity of any State. That is undoubtedly an imperative norm of international law.

At the same time, I must clarify the position of our two delegations with respect to operative paragraph 6 of the resolution. We wish to specify that our vote does not prejudge the contents of that paragraph, and in particular the reference to the line of 4 June 1967.

I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Governments of Argentina and Brazil, to reiterate our appeal to the authorities of Israel and Syria to resume negotiations with a view to finding a definitive solution to the situation of the Syrian Golan in conformity with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and in accordance with the principle of land for peace.

Mr. Laurin (Canada) (*spoke in French*): With respect to resolution 60/40 on the Syrian Golan, Canada noted last year that the resolution assigns to a

single party, Israel, the responsibility for resuming negotiations while in reality confidence-building measures and gestures of good will are necessary on both sides. We do not approve the annual submission of this resolution in the plenary, while a resolution of the Fourth Committee on the issue of the Syrian Golan, which enjoys considerable support, is adopted by the General Assembly every year. That is why we voted against the resolution.

With respect to resolution 60/41 on Jerusalem, which we support, Canada believes that the status of Jerusalem can be resolved only in the framework of a comprehensive settlement of the situation between Palestine and Israel. The issue of Jerusalem has yet to be negotiated and Canada strongly urges Israel to refrain from taking any step that would be prejudicial to a just and negotiated peace.

Mr. Bagherpour Ardekani (Islamic Republic of Iran): We voted in favour of the resolutions just adopted under agenda items 14 and 15 on the question of Palestine and the situation in the Middle East, respectively.

The views of the Islamic Republic of Iran on those important issues were articulated during the general debate and the debate on the question of Palestine in this Assembly. In short, we believe that a durable peace in Palestine will be possible through justice, an end to discrimination, an end to the occupation of all Palestinian territories, the return of all Palestinian refugees, the resort to democratic means to determine the wishes of the people, and the establishment of a democratic Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Acting President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the voting.

I give the floor to the observer of Palestine.

Mr. Mansour (Palestine): The voting that has taken place this morning, endorsing — as usual, in an overwhelming manner — the rights of the Palestinian people and renewing the mandates of programmes related to Palestine, is a clear indication of the will of the international community to uphold international law and to support what is right and what is just. We are very gratified that additional countries have shifted their votes by voting in support of those programmes, and we are extremely delighted to see such results.

Today, the voting has sent a strong message of encouragement and support to the Palestinian people, who are living under occupation and suffering tremendously under the ruthless system of occupation, and stated in a clear way to them that the Assembly will continue its support until the Israeli occupation is terminated and the independent Palestinian State is established on all of the land that was occupied by Israel in 1967, including East Jerusalem.

Our people are not interested in resolutions. They are more interested in moving from this aisle where I sit to a seat among those who represent their own countries here. We want to be as equal as anybody else. We have been denied that right for the longest time, and to those who think we are interested in resolutions and who characterize those resolutions as biased and one-sided, we say that what is biased and one-sided is the action of the Israeli occupation. What is more violent: words and resolutions, or the actions of the Israeli occupation army? To those who think that these resolutions are anti-Israel, we simply say that these resolutions are upholding international law and that it is the business of the United Nations and the General Assembly to respect international law and to uphold it. If Israel or any country violates international law, it is our collective responsibility to tell that party — be it Israel or any other — that nobody is above international law.

We would kindly ask those countries that lecture us about the programmes of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People and others being unbalanced and anti-Israel to study carefully what those programmes are doing. When the Committee is actively trying to have activities in Europe, and maybe in Japan and other countries to support the Quartet process and the peace process at the political and the economic levels, does that contradict what we are doing, or is it contributing an additional effort to move the peace process forward? Again, we are very, very proud of this moment, and we hope that we can engage in intensive discussions and dialogue with those who hold different opinions — and they are in the extreme minority — so that we can perhaps achieve a mutual understanding and the voting might be different.

In this connection, I want to express our thanks and gratitude to many countries and groups, including the European Union. We negotiated with them during the course of the last three months with a positive,

constructive and flexible attitude. We are proud of the fact that we were able to accomplish many positive things, and both sides accommodated each other in a positive way. We declare our commitment to maintain the positive spirit that our side has demonstrated in this exercise, in order to accomplish much more. I should also like to declare our willingness to other countries, including one country that, unfortunately, changed its vote. We negotiated with that country in a very positive spirit and will continue to do so. We hope that when we negotiate in a positive spirit we will be rewarded, not punished.

I should like to conclude my intervention by reiterating our deep appreciation and thanks to those who co-sponsored our resolutions as well as to those who voted in favour of them. We hope that next year the Palestinian people will be very much closer to accomplishing their objective of having their own independent Palestinian State, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to express my delegation's appreciation for the adoption by the General Assembly, moments ago, of the resolution on the Syrian Golan and the other resolutions on the Palestinian question. The outstanding votes in favour of the resolutions, including that on the Syrian Golan, reflect one very clear fact: the support of the international community of our right to recover our lands occupied by Israel. That occupation has gone on for the last 38 years.

We have listened to some colleagues commenting on rationalizing and streamlining the work of the General Assembly, including reducing the number of resolutions adopted. I am sincere when I say that we are all for it. However, it is truly regrettable that the enthusiasm for rationalization is present only when resolutions on the Middle East and Palestine are submitted — and this at a time when resolutions proliferate and mushroom due to actions by the same people who call for rationalization in other areas which serve certain interests and objectives. These, we believe, are among the aspects that truly require rationalization. We would have hoped for a single consistent standard. The overwhelming majority of Member States support the United Nations programmes on the Middle East and Palestine, and we are quite satisfied with that.

In conclusion, I would like to stress Syria's great appreciation to those Member States that sponsored the resolution on the Syrian Golan and the States that voted in favour of that resolution. I would also like to stress that Syria will forever remain sincere in its call for the realization of a just and comprehensive peace, something that continues to be rejected by the Israeli Government. We hope that States calling for the realization of this just and comprehensive peace will address the relevant party in reference to this matter and bring pressure to bear on Israel to resume the peace process, which we believe is the only way to realize a promising future in the Middle East region.

The Acting President: The General Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 14.

Before adjourning this meeting, I would like to inform members that the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of decisions from the 2005 World Summit Outcome for action by the Secretary-General, in particular regarding the ethics office; the comprehensive review of governance arrangement, including an independent external evaluation of the auditing and oversight system; and the independent audit advisory committee, will be issued tomorrow, 2 December, as document A/60/568. This report will be considered in informal consultations under the co-chairs in charge of the Secretariat and management reform, namely, Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan and Mr. Allan Rock, Permanent Representative of Canada, on Tuesday, 6 December. Members are advised to consult the Journal for the time and venue of this meeting.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.